



America's Tank Division



adapt training to urban operations

Detachment

combat

vices, and they might also be followed up with ambushes," Sherfield said. "You're going to have to clear the streets as soon as possible and practice the methods necessary to secure your casualties to take care of them."

This increased emphasis on urban operations follows NTC's latest shift in training styles.

"It's no longer going to be the big tank battles," said Staff Sgt. Dan Vallenavedo of Co. A. "The first week is expected to be squad sized training, then unit and company level training. The most important thing here is for us to develop our standard operating procedures for this kind of thing."

"The most important thing is for me to make sure my guys know what they're doing," he said. "I'm not as concerned about NTC as I am about getting that idea into their heads so that they take it seriously."

Vallenavedo said his platoon would do everything necessary to ensure that they entered the theatre of operations with a professional attitude, knowing their mission to the best of their ability.

"NTC will never be exactly like Iraq," he said, "but you can give them an attitude so they sort of know what to expect. That's all you can ask."

Medics of 1-13 Armor hone combat skills

As the National Training Center at Fort Irwin shifts its focus from major tank battles to urban, squad-sized missions, units that might traditionally not have seen much combat are preparing for anything.

The medic platoon of 1st Battalion, 13th Armor, has been training for Military Operations in Urban Terrain as diligently as their armor crewman counterparts, in full expectation of participating in combat operations later in the rotation and, potentially, in Iraq.

"NTC used to have a very distinct mission with a linear battlefield," said 1st Lt. Jerry Silvers, who was moved into Observer Control from the medical platoon. "Now they're moving away from that with civilians on the battlefield, more cities and a lot less force on force. The enemies are getting smarter, not attacking just the combat units anymore, but now going after the support elements. We have to be ready for it."

"While we're here, the company plans on entering and clearing a building ourselves," said 2nd Lt. Ben Doorink, medic platoon leader. "Even if the building's already been cleared, we have to make sure and do it again before we set up a collection point, so it'll be good training for us."

In order to prepare for this increased need for combat skills, the Soldiers have been performing more intensive training even at Fort Riley.

"When we did our gunnery, we performed a mass casualty exercise out at the Multi-Purpose Range Complex," Silvers said. "That focuses more on what we're going to be doing out there."

The platoon is also practicing different standard operating procedures in order to be more combat effective.

"We're trying to focus more on medical aid bags, so the Soldiers can be mobile and react to fire easier," Doorink said. "They're also getting some of the training that has previously only been available to higher level medics."

Silvers looks forward to this rotation at NTC being a more practical exercise of skills than anything the platoon has experienced before.

"This is going to be 100 times better than previous rotations because it's so realistic," he said. "It won't be exact, it never is, but it'll be better."

This rotation is meant to assist 1st Bn., 13th Armor, better execute their mission in Iraq sometime next year, officials said.

"The task force will be doing reconnaissance sweeps, supply routes, training the Iraqi police and rebuilding," Doorink said. "This medic platoon will be their liaison to the civilian doctors in the area, but we're going to be right there with them."